



Paving the Way for Smoother Streets

One of the Department of Public Works' (DPW) bigger tasks is maintaining our city streets. This includes taking care of the street lights, the sidewalks and trees, the streets themselves and the potholes. Even in a good-weather city such as Long Beach, potholes can be a problem. And that's not good for business.

This Q&A gives you the basics on potholes, how to report them, and what the City is doing about them. And while we're on the subject of streets: Find out how well you know the streets of Long Beach by taking the quiz on this page.

Q. First, what creates a pothole?

A. Potholes are created when the pavement—or the material beneath it—can't support the weight of the traffic it carries. The two main culprits: traffic itself and water. Once the pavement gives way, the pothole only gets worse.

Q. How does the DPW find out about potholes?

A. Often, from business owners like you. To report one, call (562) 570-3259. If you call, report the pothole by street location. An exact address is best, but phrasing like "northwest corner of XX Street and XX Avenue" will also enable the City to respond more effectively.

Q. How many potholes can City work crews repair per month?

A. Up to 2,500—if the crews aren't diverted to other assignments.

Q. Is there a backlog of potholes to be repaired?

A. Yes, there's currently a backlog of approximately 5,000 potholes, or depending on other assignments, about two to three months' worth. In recent years, the City of Long Beach drastically reduced spending while eliminating a \$102 million structural deficit. During Fiscal Year (FY) 2006, DPW spent approximately \$1.8 million to fill in potholes, but a significant amount of street repair had to be put off. Now, DPW is playing catch-up.

Q. What's being done now to improve the situation?

A. The City Council took strong action in 2006 by allocating \$10 million to reconstruct streets (\$5 million for residential streets, \$5 million for major streets). The City Council listened to constituents' concerns and took even stronger action for FY 2007. It increased residential street reconstruction funding to \$7 million, while maintaining the \$5 million dedicated to major streets.

Q. What's the long-term plan?

A. The City's goal is to raise all streets over the next 10 years to a "Good" level—meaning that pavement surfaces are in sound structural condition, with some sealing and coating of cracks required in selected areas. Smoother streets improve the driving experience in Long Beach, which makes good business sense. ■



City Streets Quiz

How well do you know the streets of Long Beach? *(Answers on page 7)*

1. How many total miles of streets are there in the City?

- A. 815 C. 1,226
B. 992

2. How about the number of bridges?

- A. 58 C. 165
B. 122

3. The City has to maintain this many street lights:

- A. 19,211 C. 42,548
B. 27,800

4. The number of traffic signals in Long Beach is:

- A. 316 C. 590
B. 401

5. Are there more miles of alleys, or storm drains?

To learn more

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